

How Cats Helped Spread the Influenza Epidemic

Scientists Dissect the Bodies of Many Dead Cats and Find the Specific Germs of "Spanish Influenza" and Twelve Other Throat Diseases



The Tongue of a Dog Was for Two Thousand Years Popularly Believed to Have a Healing Value. Recent Scientific Investigations Show That a Dog's Tongue Usually Carries a Wide Assortment of Dangerous Germs. A Dog Licks His Sores Because He Doesn't Know Any Better. Instead of Healing Himself in This Way He Often Succeeds in Infecting Himself with New and More Serious Troubles.

THE great "Spanish influenza" epidemic was the deadliest disease outbreak that has afflicted the modern world, and up to the present its cause has been largely a mystery.

All the civilized countries of the world have been struggling with the disease and as yet have no satisfactory means of dealing with it. Once an epidemic is started it spreads with great rapidity and nobody is able to protect himself against it with certainty.

What causes the spread of influenza? Science has just discovered that the common house cat is one of the most dangerous agents in disseminating the plague. The Government Veterinary Institute of Switzerland, one of the most important institutions for the study of animal diseases in the world, has just proved the dangerous relations between cats and influenza.

There was a severe outbreak of influenza in Switzerland this Summer, as in other parts of the world. Many dead cats, killed by some unknown cause, were seen lying about in Switzerland. The institute secured the dead bodies of many of them, made a thorough postmortem examination,

and found they had died of influenza.

The type of influenza from which they suffered caused a severe inflammation of the lungs. In sixty out of seventy-eight dead cats was found the specific bacillus of the deadly "Spanish influenza." In all the dead animals there were several different influenza microbes, in some cases running up to as many as a dozen different kinds.

The Swiss Institute has proved that the cat is more subject to diseases of the throat and lungs than any other domestic animal. It has less power of resisting the invasion of germs than the dog and many other animals. While the dog takes in an enormous quantity of disease germs and filth, its saliva is very strong and is capable of overcoming much of this infection. The cat is not so well able to fight germs. But though the cat is more subject to respiratory diseases than the dog, the latter is fully as great a menace to the public health.

It has been observed that a large proportion of house cats—nearly 75 per cent—suffer from coughs and other throat trou-

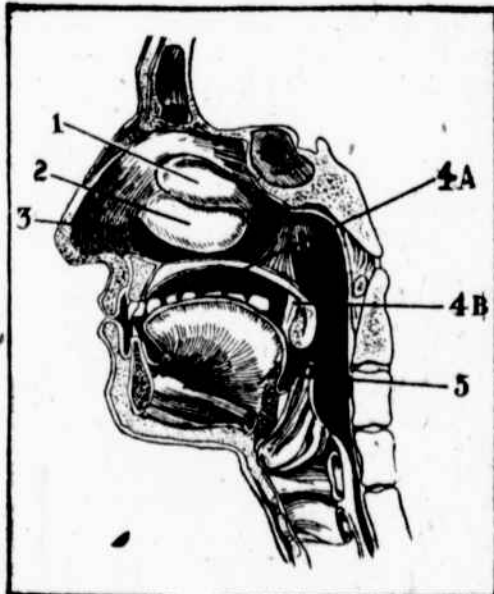
bles, even when there is no definite epidemic of disease. Listen to all the feline pets you encounter and you will be astonished how many of them are troubled with a nasty cough.

When we learn all the facts that have been proved by science with regard to cats and disease we shall be shocked to think how many delicate American women and children are in the habit of kissing and fondling these animals. Any parent who allows his child to put its face near a cat's mouth is incurring a grave responsibility. Many children are in the habit of letting cats sleep with them. This habit entails a practical certainty of spreading any throat or lung trouble with which the cat may be affected.

Toward the close of the Summer there was a marked increase of influenza in the United States, and some people began to fear that there might be a similar epidemic to the great "Spanish influenza" outbreak of 1918. That was the most deadly attack of pestilence that ever attacked our country. People should not help such an outbreak to occur again by fondling useless cats and dogs.

The cat not only communicates

(On Left) Microscopic Slide of Diphtheria Germs Found in an Apparently Healthy Cat's Throat. (And Below) The Areas Where Diphtheria Germs Lodge. 1, 2 and 3, the Nasal Chambers; 4A, the Hard Palate, 4B, the Soft Palate; 5, Opening of the Bronchial Tubes.



those diseases from which it suffers, but spreads the germs of many others. For instance, persons having the diphtheria germs in their throats press the cat to their mouths, and thus the germs are passed to the animals, who then carry them to other houses.

The cat's constant habit of digging in garbage barrels and filth heaps is another cause of spreading disease germs. It has been proved that the cat has pawed over the discarded dressings from the sick-room and then carried infection back to its owner's home and children.

The doctors and scientists of the country have called attention to the dangers that lie in the pet cat and dog, but it is hard work to wake the public up. One physician who has gathered some very interesting evidence of the deadly association between cats and dogs and the influenza epidemic in this country is Dr. W. E. Roberts, of White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Examining a Cat's Throat for Symptoms of Contagious Diseases. The Cat, It Has Been Found, Although Suffering Little from Diphtheria Itself, Is What Is Termed a "Perfect Host" for the Influenza Germs. The Microbes Find Lodgment in Its Rough Tongue, in the Corrugated Roof of Its Mouth, or Hard Palate, and Around Its Soft Palate, Just as in Human Beings, and There They Thrive and Multiply Without Doing Harm to the Cat.

"I have made a special investigation of the recent severe epidemic of coryza, or so-called colds, which seem to have followed in the wake of the epidemic of influenza," he says. "This investigation has been made with great care because of the increased number of throat disorders which have been more noticeable in those persons who are associated with or come in contact with cats and dogs. Careful investigation of a great number of cats and dogs has demonstrated that 90 per cent of these animals are infected with a specific bacillus producing a distemper or contagious form of nasal catarrh."

"I have found in a number of instances where persons have been troubled with a stubborn contagious catarrh of many months' duration there is present the specific organism which is characteristic of the disease as found in dogs and cats."

"In one instance the woman gave a history of having a catarrhal affection of the mucous membrane of the nose with inflammation of the sinuses for a number of months. Examination revealed the specific bacillus of distemper or contagious catarrh which is present in the nose and throat of small dogs. One special feature of this case was that this woman had been to a number of specialists and had received all kinds of treatments with only temporary benefits. The growth in the incubator of the culture taken from the nasal passage of the dog not only revealed the specific bacillus of distemper, but various mixed types of streptococcus (disease germs)."

"This woman stated that she not only had the dog constantly in her company, but had made him sleep with her in bed. She stated, with pride, that she was in the habit of kissing the dog many, many times a day."

"How any self-respecting woman could so lower her sex refinement as to caress a dog with kisses is beyond my imagination. Upon further investigation I find that many infections are brought about by the association of dogs and cats with children as well as adults. I am quite positive, after serious study, that dogs and cats are largely responsible for the epidemic of colds and chronic catarrhal rhinorrhea which infect great numbers of the populace."

"This habit, or craze, of the women of our land of fondling dogs as pets is becoming alarming, and I feel that it is time that the health boards of the country should give more careful attention to this matter. Many of our States have passed a law compelling the population to wear masks to prevent the spread of influenza. At the same time dogs are allowed to mingle with the people in the streets, to occupy their homes, to sleep in the bed with women and children, sneeze and cough and scatter disease broadcast, without any attention being paid to this source of infection."

"There is not another source of disease which is infecting the human race more alarmingly than the caressing by children and women of the small dogs, all of which carry a specific bacillus which is communicable to the human race. I am quite sure that some drastic measures should be taken by the health authorities to prevent the spread of this disease, which is not only of a serious nature but very intractable of cure."

"I have no doubt but that many of the cases of the present epidemic of coryza (severe cold in the head) have for their specific source the specific bacillus and other micro-organisms which are present

in the nose and mucous tract of pet dog and cats. There should be some law enacted to prevent people, who are shortsighted as to be unconscious of the laws of hygiene and modern sanitation, from kissing and nursing dogs."

Writers in many health publications throughout the country have been earnestly calling attention to the fact that cats and dogs are the agents for spreading many diseases in this country in addition to influenza. These writers emphasize the fact that in our modern civilized life, with its crowded conditions, there is no place for cats and dogs. They belong to the age of the cave man and other periods of the past. They declare that the habit of kissing and embracing cats and dogs is a shocking menace to public health and should be fought by everyone who understands the elementary rules of health. A. H. Bush, an expert, writing in the National Public Health Monthly, makes an intelligent and convincing attack on the dog.

"From every point of view," says this scientist, "the city dog is a dead loss. For every penny spent on him he returns only a bad scent. To a poor man the cost of license, food, housing and attention for a dog are no small items of expense. Assume that a poor working man earns only 15 cents an hour for his labor, we often find such a man spending on a dog for food alone \$1.05 per week. At this rate per week for a year of fifty-two weeks the outlay amounts to \$54.60—enough to buy a whole carcass of prime beef."

"The dog is too uncleanly and destructive for an indoor associate, and when allowed to run at large is a nuisance to the community in general. Kept in restraint by chain or kennel, no matter what his natural tendency, he soon becomes vicious and dangerous."

"Practically every dog is loaded with intestinal worms. With his predilection and preference for raw and putrid meats he acquires a stock of this repulsive form of life more varied and numerous than those inhabiting any of the other domestic animals. The invisible eggs and larvae are carried in the hair, in the nose and exterior parts as well as internally; and many forms of this parasite readily adopt man as their host, and as they are easily conveyed to him in various ways through his intimate association with the dog, many illnesses, often diagnosed as 'bowel,' 'stomach' or 'liver trouble,' result."

"The invasion of man by these parasites is frequently attended by serious if not fatal consequences; and the canine companion is a prolific source for their transmission to him. The following is a quotation from a treatise on intestinal worms by an eminent medical authority: 'In general the frequency of occurrence of intestinal worms is proportioned to the extent of the use of uncooked or not sufficiently cooked meats, the drinking of unfiltered, standing waters, uncleanly habits and the intimacy of association with domestic animals. It therefore follows that an important precaution against infection by parasites are properly cooked foods and the avoidance of intimacy with domestic animals.'"

"Viewed from the standpoint of sanitation and good health for the human being there are many sound reasons for the banishment of the dog from the centres of population."

"Notwithstanding his highly developed and exquisite sense of smell the dog has an unpleasant odor which is a sort of



Going Out of the House It Will Be Picked Up by Another Child, and by Its Characteristic Spitting Pass the Germs on to Its Holder.



Again, It Licks Its Paws with Its Germ-Filled Saliva and Then "Washes" Them Over Its Face.



A Woman Will Then Pick Up the Cat to Caress It, and the Germs Conveyed to Its Face by Its Tongue Are Communicated to Her Mouth and Face.

public advance agent for evils of a more potent nature radiating from the aura. Externally he is usually well-stocked with fleas, vermin of various kinds, mange, cutaneous eruptions and germs of infectious and contagious diseases, and common dirt mixed with filth acquired by eating and rolling in carrion and other refuse matter.

"He is also an agent not only in inoculating members of the household and others with whom he may come in contact, with his own forms of influenza and rabies, but aids materially in distributing epidemics prevailing in the community by his visits to garbage and waste matter on the premises of families under quarantine."

"To anybody who is well informed regarding the pestilential character of the filth and disease clinging to and thrown off by a dog and circulated in the atmosphere in the form of dry, infinitesimal particles, a room thus contaminated is almost intolerable."

"Some people who confine their dog within doors a great part of the time attempt to keep him clean by frequent bathing; but when this operation is carried on within the house—and some use the family bathtub for this purpose—the intended hygienic action serves only as an aggregation of the dangerous features of the animal. The germs, bacilli, filth particles, aromas and fumes are set free in the bath, diffused and distributed about the house by evaporation and air currents."

The conclusion of this expert and of many others is that the dog, once a boon companion of the cave man, is only a menace to health, life and limb in modern city life.